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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 BEIJING 002923

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DEPARTMENT FOR D, EAP, EAP/CM, EAP/K
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SN, JP, CH, KN

SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY STEINBERG'S SEPTEMBER 29, 2009
CONVERSATION WITH PRC EVFM WANG GUANGYA

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1.
4 (b/d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) September 29, 2009; 12:00 p.m.; Ministry of Foreign
Affairs; PRC

[1](#)2. (SBU) Participants:

U.S.

The Deputy Secretary
Amb. Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., Embassy Beijing
Joseph Donovan, EAP Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of
State
Rear Admiral Charles Leidig, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Amb. Joseph DeTrani, Mission Manager for North Korea, DNI
Derek Mitchell, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense
Aubrey Carlson, Embassy Political Minister-Counselor
RDML Bradley Gerhrke, U.S. Defense Attache in Beijing
Pamela Park, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary
Robert Koepcke, Embassy Political Officer (notetaker)
James Brown, Interpreter

PRC

Wang Guangya, Executive Vice Foreign Minister
Guan Youfei, Ministry of National Defense, Deputy Director,
International Office
Zheng Zeguag, Director General, MFA North American and
Oceanian Affairs Department
Zhang Kunsheng, Director General, MFA Protocol Department
Yang Houlan, Ambassador for Korean Peninsula Issues
Ding Xiaowen, Deputy Director General, MFA North American and
Oceanian Affairs Department
Li Song, Deputy Director General, MFA Arms Control and
Disarmament Department
Wang Zonglai, Deputy Director General, MFA Boundary and
Maritime Affairs Department
Cong Peiwu, Counselor, MFA North American and Oceanian
Affairs Department
An Gang, Counselor and USA Division Director, MFA North
American and Oceanian Affairs Department

[1](#)3. (C) SUMMARY: EFVM Wang Guangya called on the U.S. to
"maintain positive momentum" in bilateral relations ahead of

President Obama's planned November travel to China in a September 29 meeting with Deputy Secretary Steinberg. Wang expressed hope that President Obama would include a meeting with NPC Chairman Wu Bangguo on his schedule. Wang agreed with the need to include climate change and energy on the President's agenda and said China would continue to work toward a global agreement for the Copenhagen conference. When urged to move forward with a U.S.-Japan-China trilateral policy planning meeting, Wang highlighted Seoul's concerns over the idea and suggested the three sides remain in contact on the idea. Wang cautioned that the Chinese citizenry was playing an increasing role in influencing policy-making and called on the U.S. to handle sensitive issues like trade and the Dalai Lama "prudently." Wang said the two sides should move forward as soon as possible with the Human Rights Dialogue. Wang said that U.S. actions in China's EEZ could trigger "unexpected clashes"; the Deputy Secretary stressed the importance of finding ways to deal with differing interpretations of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in order to minimize the potential for damage to the bilateral relationship. Wang linked PRC cooperation on shipping non-lethal supplies across Chinese territory in support of security efforts in Afghanistan to the U.S. release of Uighurs from Guantanamo to third-countries. Burma, Af/Pak, and upcoming Chinese official visits to the United States were also discussed. END SUMMARY.

PRC Wants to Maintain Momentum Ahead of Obama Visit

14. (C) PRC Executive Vice Foreign Minister Wang Guangya opened his September 29 meeting with the Deputy Secretary by

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stressing the importance of "maintaining the positive momentum" of bilateral relations as the two sides worked toward President Obama's planned November visit to China. Wang said that in addition to the agenda for the President's official meetings, the two sides should ensure that the visit sent a positive signal about shared readiness to increase strategic cooperation and benefit people in both countries. The Deputy Secretary responded that it was important that the visit not only demonstrate concrete outcomes but also highlight the unique nature of the bilateral relationship and the benefits it provided for people in both countries and the world. He stressed the importance of a public appearance by the President. Both sides should show leadership on climate change given the timing of the visit a month before the Copenhagen conference.

Climate Change Talks on PRC Agenda for Obama Visit

15. (C) Wang agreed with the importance of including climate change and energy on the President's visit agenda, given the major roles both countries played on the issue. He claimed that the world's assessment of President Hu's statement of China's position on the issue at the UN summit on climate change was positive, and China would continue to work toward a global agreement. He noted that in addition to the multilateral setting, the U.S. and China should strengthen bilateral cooperation on climate change issues. Wang expressed hope that in addition to calls on President Hu and Premier Wen, POTUS would meet with National People's Congress Chairman Wu Bangguo during his November visit to Beijing, stressing the importance of the NPC in the PRC political system.

China Not Ready to Move Forward on Trilateral with Japan

16. (C) Turning to the proposal for a U.S.-Japan-China trilateral policy planners meeting, the Deputy Secretary noted that the arrival of a new government in Tokyo could provide an opportunity for moving forward with such talks. He noted that the U.S. had sought to reassure the ROK that

such a trilateral would not be aimed at excluding other countries in the region and stressed the importance of leaders of the world's three largest economies engaging in dialogue. Wang replied that the trilateral concept had been proposed some time ago and that a track-two mechanism with academics from the three countries was active in discussing major issues of trilateral concern. When the idea was first proposed, China had received pressure not only from the North Koreans but even more so from Seoul, Wang said. He noted that the new government in Tokyo was "warm" to the idea, that the three sides should remain in contact on the idea, and consultations among the three could continue even without a regular trilateral mechanism.

Public Opinion Constrains PRC Options on Sensitive Issues

17. (C) Turning to China's "core interests," Wang cautioned that Chinese citizens were playing an increasing role in influencing policy-making, including foreign policy. He called on both sides to handle sensitive issues "prudently" given this new reality. As an example, Wang pointed to last year's "high-profile" meeting between French President Nicolas Sarkozy and the Dalai Lama as the cause of protests among Chinese citizens. He stressed that a similar incident after the POTUS visit to China could undermine the gains of a successful visit. Wang noted that while U.S.-China trade and economic relations were mostly healthy, the U.S. decision to invoke Section 421 measures against Chinese tire imports into the U.S. had engendered a "strong reaction" from Chinese citizens. He added that China was concerned that the announcement of the countermeasures had undermined the positive atmosphere of NPC Chairman Wu Bangguo's trip to the U.S., which had been wrapping up just as the announcement was made. He stressed that he did not believe the timing had been deliberate, but noted that Chinese citizens were demanding to know why such an action had been taken by the

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U.S. side. Deputy Secretary Steinberg said that the U.S. believed strongly in public engagement on foreign policy to build public confidence in foreign policy decisions. He also underscored the importance of dialogue between the two sides to ensure that misunderstandings could be avoided.

China Calls for Human Rights Dialogue

18. (C) Given the importance of intensifying cooperation to push forward the strategic track of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue, EVFM Wang said, the two sides should move forward as soon as possible with the Human Rights Dialogue.

Wang Cautions U.S. on Actions in PRC EEZ

19. (C) EVFM Wang said that U.S. actions in China's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) could trigger "unexpected clashes," adding that both sides were acutely aware of the damage done to bilateral relations by the 2001 EP-3 incident. He stressed that minor incidents could lead to serious damage to public perception, and urged the U.S. to refrain from actions in China's territorial waters and EEZ that violated UNCLOS or Chinese law. Wang underscored the domestic political pressure that PRC policy-makers were under from Chinese citizens dissatisfied with U.S. actions in China's EEZ.

110. (C) Deputy Secretary Steinberg said that both sides had strong interests at stake in their disagreement over the interpretation of UNCLOS, and that the U.S. concern over China's interpretation went beyond the bilateral relationship. He stressed the importance of finding ways to deal with the principled disagreement over UNCLOS, both its underlying causes as well as day-to-day solutions to minimize the potential for damage to the bilateral relationship, adding that the Chinese interpretation would make much of the

world inaccessible to military vessels. Wang claimed that "innocent passage" did not include military vessels conducting military activities. Steinberg stressed that UNCLOS was clear in allowing passage of military vessels.

Upcoming Official Visits to the U.S.

¶11. (C) Wang sought U.S. support for Chinese leadership visits to the U.S. that would precede President Obama's November travel to China. Noting that Central Military Commission Vice Chairman Xu Caihou would visit the U.S. in late October, Wang said that Xu's travel would play an important role in increasing understanding between the two countries' militaries, and requested that General Xu be granted a meeting with President Obama. He noted that Director of the CCP Organization Department Li Yuanchao would travel to the U.S. with the aim of expanding cooperative programs for professional training of government officials, adding that he hoped Minister Li would have an opportunity to meet with Secretary Clinton, National Security Adviser Jones and Commerce Secretary Locke.

Af/Pak

¶12. (C) The Deputy Secretary underscored that shared U.S.-China strategic interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan should facilitate collaboration by the two sides on the issue without raising the concerns of the leadership in Pakistan. He urged China to respond positively for SRAP Holbrooke's suggestion for a working-level delegation to visit the United States in October, and stressed that the situation represented a new opportunity for U.S.-China cooperation.

¶13. (C) In response, Wang stressed the importance of helping the government in Afghanistan build capacity for governance and for social and economic development. Pakistan had become the frontline for the struggle against terrorism, and the international community should support Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts, but should also bear in mind the sensitivity among the Pakistani people with regard to its

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sovereignty and national dignity. Wang said that China hoped for improvements in the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan and their counter-terrorism efforts, adding that maintaining "reasonably good" relations between Pakistan and India was also crucial for regional security. China was a friend to all countries in the region, Wang claimed, suggesting that the international community should be "more attentive to the weaker party" in dealing with Pakistan-India relations. Wang was pessimistic on the security situation in South Asia and urged the U.S. to consider "root causes" of extremism, such as lack of social and economic development, adding that China engaged bilaterally with Afghanistan and Pakistan to support development.

¶14. (C) The Deputy Secretary echoed Wang's call for economic and social development in Af/Pak, noting legislation recently passed by Congress providing new economic assistance for Pakistan and U.S. efforts to ease the electricity crisis there. On India-Pakistan relations, he stressed the importance of demonstrating to both sides that relations with the U.S. and China were not zero-sum in nature. He emphasized India's legitimate concern over extremists entering the country from Pakistan, and urged Pakistan to deal with this problem.

Non-Lethal Trans-shipments Linked to Gitmo Uighurs

¶15. (C) Turning to the U.S. proposal for non-lethal transshipments through China to support security efforts in Afghanistan, Wang reported that the proposal faced "difficulties," adding that China had noted the U.S. handling

of Uighur inmates in Guantanamo. He claimed the U.S. actions had created an internal problem for China, and that more "prudent" actions by the U.S. on the Guantanamo Uighurs would help remove "some of the obstacles" on the Chinese side to helping with the shipments.

Burma

¶16. (C) The Deputy Secretary noted the recently-concluded U.S. policy review on Burma, and stressed that while our objectives of political reform and encouraging openness remained the same, we were ready to look at dialogue as an effective way of dealing with the issue. He stressed that the issue was another opportunity for increased U.S.-China cooperation, and that both sides had a shared interest in stability and increased openness from Burma. Wang responded that China welcomed direct U.S. engagement with Burma. The country had many complex problems, but it was ultimately up to Burma to solve them; the international community could only assist. Wang claimed that China had stressed to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon that Burma's future was up to its government and people. The international community had differing views on the Burmese regime's seven-step roadmap, but at least the roadmap demonstrated Burma's desire to improve its internal situation and hold general elections. Wang expressed concern that focusing solely on sanctions would negatively affect the situation in Burma. He said that China had detected improvements in the situation in Burma over the last year. He stressed that ASEAN should play a greater role in pushing Burma in a positive direction, and that the involvement of major powers from outside the region raised suspicions among the junta that the intention was regime change.

¶17. (U) The Deputy Secretary cleared this message.

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